

Message Text

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E.O 11652: N/A

TAGS: SPOP, EGEN, SA

SUBJECT: SAUDI POPULATION

1. FOR THE FIRST TIME, WE HAVE SEEN REFERENCES IN THE PRESS TO THE SAUDI CENSUS TAKEN IN THE FALL OF 1974. ACCORDING TO THE PRESS, THE TOTAL POPULATION OF THE KINGDOM IS 7,200,000 (SEVEN MILLION, TWO HUNDRED THOUSAND), AND THAT NUMBER HAS BEEN OFFICIALLY REPORTED TO THE KING.

2. EMBASSY LEARNED FROM A RELIABLE SOURCE IN THE SPRING OF 1975 THAT TOTAL SAUDI POPULATION WAS 5.6 MILLION (FIVE POINT SIX MILLION). WE ALSO HEARD ON A NUMBER OF OCCASIONS THAT THE FIGURE COULD NOT BE RELEASED PUBLICLY BECAUSE IT MADE SAUDI ARABIA SEEM TOO SMALL AND VULNERABLE. THERE IS NO QUESTION THAT THE 5.6 FIGURE IS RELIABLE.

3. THE ONLY ITEM OF INTEREST IN THE SAUDI RELEASES IS TALK OF THE NON-SAUDI POPULATION AS APPROACHING TWO (2) MILLION. IF THIS FIGURE IS ACCURATE, AND THE INFLATION HAS BEEN ADDED TO THE FIGURE FOR SAUDI CITIZENS ALONE, THEN THE TOTAL NUMBER OF THE LATTER WOULD ONLY BE AROUND 3.6 MILLION. THIS FIGURE WOULD INDEED CREATE SOMETHING OF A STIR LOCALLY IF IT BECAME KNOWN.

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